

## Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 COTONO 00175 031606Z

41

ACTION AF-06

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 OMB-01 AID-05 ACDA-05 /076 W

----- 028448

R 031515Z FEB 76

FM AMEMBASSY COTONOU

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8091

INFO AMEMBASSY ABIDJAN

AMEMBASSY ACCRA

AMEMBASSY LAGOS

AMEMBASSY LOME

AMEMBASSY NIAMEY

AMEMBASSY OUAGADOUGOU

AMEMBASSY PARIS

C O N F I D E N T I A L COTONOU 0175

ABIDJAN ALSO FOR REDSO AND DATT; NIAMEY ALSO FOR ADO

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: PGOV, DM

SUBJ: FURTHER COMMENTS ON BENIN CABINET RESHUFFLE

REF COTONOU 166 (NOTAL),

SUMMARY: OUR FURTHER COMMENTS ON BENIN CABINET RESHUFFLE ON JAN 30, PROMISED REFTEL ARE GIVEN BELOW. IN A NUTSHELL, THERE IS NO SIGNIFICANT CHANGE OF MEN, ORIENTATION OR BALANCE. END SUMMARY

1. CABINET CHANGES ANNOUNCED JAN 30 (REF) ARE OF LITTLE IMPORTANCE, BUT NOT WITHOUT INTEREST. NO MINISTERS DROPPED, BUT THREE ARE REWARDED FOR SERVICES BY BEING ADDED. THE BALANCE OF FORCES IN THE CABINET REMAINS THE SAME. FOUR ARE RADICAL REVOLUTIONARIES (KEREKOU, AZONHIHO, AHOUEYA AND GUEZODJE). AS BEFORE, THE STRONG MEN ARE KERKOU AND  
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 COTONO 00175 031606Z

AZONHIHO. AHOUEYA AND GUEZODJE (BOTH PHYSICALLY IMPOSING BUT

MENTALLY WEAK), AS WELL AS ALL THE REST, ARE "YES MEN".

2. THE POSITION OF AZONHIHO (COMMUNIST) IS SOMEWHAT STRENGTH-ENED BECAUSE HE IS NO LONGER "INTERIM" BUT FULLFLEDGED INTERIOR MINISTER. HIS CONFIRMATION IN THE DUAL INTERIOR/NATIONAL ORIENTATION ROLE LAYS TO REST RUMORS THAT HE MIGHT GIVE UP INTERIOR. WITH HIS CONTROL OF THE COUNTRY'S TERRITORIAL ADMINISTRATION, THE POLICE AND BENIN'S ONLY (MARXIST) POLITICAL PARTY, HE REMAINS THE MOST POWERFUL MAN IN BENIN, EXCEPT PERHAPS FOR KEREKOU. AZONHIHO IS A MIN DELEGATE OF THE PRESIDENCY, BUT IN THE PAST THIS TECHNICAL RESTRICTION ON HIS FULL POWERS (IN INFORMATION/NATIONAL ORIENTATION) HAS BEEN MEANINGLESS. HE OPERATES LARGELY ON HIS OWN. THE OTHERS ARE AFRAID OF HIM.

3. THE CIVILIAN EXTREMISTS (I.E. COMMUNISTS) LIKE PREFECTS ADJO BOKO, ISSA ABDOULAYE, CAPO CHICHI AND OGOUMA ARE LEFT OUT, DESPITE THEIR REPORTED ASPIRATIONS. EVIDENTLY KEREKOU IS DETERMINED TO KEEP HIS CABINET MILITARY. PRESERVE OF RADICAL CIVILIANS IS TO BE THE TERRITORIAL ADMINISTRATION, THE PARTY AND AMBASSADORSHIPS ABROAD. NEVERTHELESS, THE INFLUENCE OF THE CIVILIAN EXTREMISTS HAS BEEN CONSIDERABLE, AND WE EXPECT IT TO CONTINUE.

4. APPRAISAL OF THE NEW MINISTERS: RODRIGUES AS EMOTIONALLY UNSTABLE, UNRELIABLE AND NOTORIOUSLY CORRUPT (THE REGIME'S PURITANICAL ANTI-CORRUPTION POLICY DOES NOT APPLY TO MILITARY OFFICERS). DOSSOU IS WEAK, BUT FRENCH (WHO KNOW HIM BETTER THAN WE) SAY HE IS NONDOCTRINAIRE AND NOT UNFRIENDLY. AKPO, FORMERLY AIKPE'S DEPUTY, HAS BEEN ACTING COMMANDER OF THE PARATROOPS SINCE KEREKOU MURDERED AIKPE. THOUGH UNTESTED, HE MAY POSSESS SOME LEADERSHIP ABILITY. BUT HE IS INEXPERIENCED AND ONLY A SECOND LIEUTENANT.

5. IF WE CAN PREDICT ACCURATELY WHAT RESPONSIBILITIES FALL UNDER WHICH MINISTERS IN THE RE-SCRABLE OF FUNCTIONS, IT WOULD APPEAR THAT THE MINISTER WE WILL HAVE TO DEAL WITH ON THE COTONOU BRIDGE AND THE MALANVILLE ROAD PROJECTS WILL BE RODRIGUEZ. THERE IS LITTLE TO CHOOSE BETWEEN HIM AND HIS PREDECESSOR IN THAT FUNCTIONAL AREA, THE RUDE, STUBBORN, CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 COTONO 00175 031606Z

DOCTRINAIRE CAPT AHOUHEYA.

6. THE RESHUFFLE SHOULD PRODUCE FURTHER STABILITY, SINCE (DESPITE MANY RUMORS THAT SOME WOULD BE DROPPED) NOBODY LOST MINISTERIAL RANK AND THREE MILITARY OFFICERS FAITHFUL TO KEREKOU WERE ADDED. SO FAR AS WE KNOW, NOBODY WITH ANY INFLUENCE OR FOLLOWING IS LEFT DISSATISFIED.

7. FRENCH AND WEST GERMAN AMBS HERE SHARE ABOVE ASSESS-  
MENT.  
ENGLE

CONFIDENTIAL

NNN

## Message Attributes

**Automatic Decaptioning:** X  
**Capture Date:** 01 JAN 1994  
**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
**Concepts:** CABINET, REORGANIZATIONS, PERSONNEL MOVEMENTS  
**Control Number:** n/a  
**Copy:** SINGLE  
**Draft Date:** 03 FEB 1976  
**Decaption Date:** 01 JAN 1960  
**Decaption Note:**  
**Disposition Action:** RELEASED  
**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
**Disposition Authority:** coburnhl  
**Disposition Case Number:** n/a  
**Disposition Comment:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Date:** 28 MAY 2004  
**Disposition Event:**  
**Disposition History:** n/a  
**Disposition Reason:**  
**Disposition Remarks:**  
**Document Number:** 1976COTONO00175  
**Document Source:** CORE  
**Document Unique ID:** 00  
**Drafter:** n/a  
**Enclosure:** n/a  
**Executive Order:** GS  
**Errors:** N/A  
**Film Number:** D760041-0038  
**From:** COTONOU  
**Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Image Path:**  
**ISecure:** 1  
**Legacy Key:** link1976/newtext/t19760289/aaaadaao.tel  
**Line Count:** 118  
**Locator:** TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM  
**Office:** ACTION AF  
**Original Classification:** CONFIDENTIAL  
**Original Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Original Previous Classification:** n/a  
**Original Previous Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Page Count:** 3  
**Previous Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Previous Classification:** CONFIDENTIAL  
**Previous Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Reference:** 76 COTONOU 166  
**Review Action:** RELEASED, APPROVED  
**Review Authority:** coburnhl  
**Review Comment:** n/a  
**Review Content Flags:**  
**Review Date:** 21 APR 2004  
**Review Event:**  
**Review Exemptions:** n/a  
**Review History:** RELEASED <21 APR 2004 by greeneet>; APPROVED <11 AUG 2004 by coburnhl>  
**Review Markings:**

Margaret P. Grafeld  
Declassified/Released  
US Department of State  
EO Systematic Review  
04 MAY 2006

**Review Media Identifier:**  
**Review Referrals:** n/a  
**Review Release Date:** n/a  
**Review Release Event:** n/a  
**Review Transfer Date:**  
**Review Withdrawn Fields:** n/a  
**Secure:** OPEN  
**Status:** NATIVE  
**Subject:** FURTHER COMMENTS ON BENIN CABINET RESHUFFLE  
**TAGS:** PGOV, DM  
**To:** STATE  
**Type:** TE  
**Markings:** Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006